

SDAT Steering Committee Meeting April 23, 2013

On April 16, 2013 an email notice was sent to community focus group members of the 2012-2013 "I Imagine South Wenatchee" and Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) project about the presentation of the final SDAT report. Additionally, a notification on the City of Wenatchee website went out on the same day inviting all South Wenatchee stakeholders to participate. Following the presentation the community was invited to stay and engage in discussion with SDAT steering committee members and City Staff about South Wenatchee development efforts.

Steering Committee Attendees: Tom Bassett, Bob Shepard, Norma Gallegos, Gustavo Montoya, Julie Kagele, Jim Bailey

City Staff Attendees: Allison Williams, Dan Frazier, Gary Owen, Will Piro

Topic Discussion Facilitators

Community Organization: Norma Gallegos, Julie Kagele, Gustavo Montoya

Public Art: Terry Valdez

Neighborhood Improvement: Dan Frazier

Economic Development: Allison Williams

Location: Wenatchee Community Center

Attachments

Final SDAT report Presentation

Poster Board Information

Survey Results

Summary

The evening's event activities began at 5:00pm with an open house. Poster boards with information about suggestions from the SDAT report were stationed around the room for public viewing. Poster topics included street design, improving the pedestrian realm, pedestrian bridge crossings, social capital and public art projects. Following the open house, introductory remarks were given by City Staff member Will Piro which transitioned into City Council Member Jim Bailey and SDAT Steering Committee member Tom Bassett presenting the final American Institute of Architectures SDAT report. The presentation covered the major topic areas within the report and provided an account of possible strategies for overall South Wenatchee improvement.

South Wenatchee stakeholders were then invited to join SDAT Steering committee members and City Staff to fill out surveys and comment cards regarding report suggestions. Open ended discussions were also held regarding the following topics: community organization, neighborhood infrastructure, economic development, and public art. Community members generated excellent feedback in these categories and provided important direction for community and City cooperation on development efforts Wenatchee. The overarching comments and suggestions produced during these conversations included:

Community Organization

- Create citizen led ("grassroots") community organization or neighborhood association to lead South Wenatchee development efforts.
- Community organization should have clear and concise message that represents the collective mission of the South Wenatchee residents.
- Improve communication between City and South Wenatchee Community. Notices for events need to reach a greater number of South Wenatchee residents and business owners.
- Encourage leadership development and civic engagement amongst South Wenatchee residents and stakeholders. Leaders for community organization should be identified and recruited.
- Utilize Community Center as a hub for local engagement, centralizing services and conducting education programs for residents in the neighborhood.
- Strengthen trust between South Wenatchee residents and City officials by holding regular, non-formal, community events where both groups can "get to know each other" on a neighbor to neighbor level.

Public Art

- Connectivity/gathering places - Methow Park enhancements to encourage more family participation. Build on existing Farmers Market activities with visual arts, crafts and music opportunities.
- Lighting - Illumination of bridges(s)
- Explore use of reflective paints for art work incorporated into near street crossing areas. i.e. used in the Netherlands on highways.
- Community Center - explore increased usage by families for art/music activities on a consistent basis. Key gathering place! Identify who will utilize the center?
- Youth - Involve youth in the planning and execution of public art projects or art activities in collaboration with a professional artist.
- Infrastructure - Encourage city and state entities to incorporate art into future street or related public facility improvements/streetscapes. i.e. Ferry St. pedestrian crossing improvements.
- Garden area - Explore ideas for location of garden area near the West exit off the Sellers bridge where street has been closed off by new construction.
- Inclusive: Very important to not focus on just the large Hispanic population but to also honor the long-time residents of other ethnic groups. Be inclusive with any art related endeavors.
- Generational shifts - Important to understand that the new norm, is that they are many times up to three generations living in the same home. Mainly due to the economic down turn of the past five years. We need to keep this shift in mind in terms of creating places or programming to empower these families.

Economic Development

- Support new and existing businesses and corner stores in South Wenatchee.
- Attract grocery store
- Increase safe pedestrian access to South Wenatchee businesses.
- Further define the focus of warehouse conversions versus business development.
- Encourage business growth but minimize gentrification.
- Improve appearance and atmosphere of South Wenatchee to support business environment

Neighborhood Infrastructure

- Improve pedestrian access to businesses and river front.
- Public transportation needs to be more accessible.
- Bus stops in South Wenatchee need better maintenance.
- Individuals expressed concerns about centrally located parking lots, suggesting vandalism and theft may increase with cars parked together. Might be difficult to accomplish given proximity to adjacent properties.

Next Steps

1. Survey responses and discussion feedback indicate a strong community desire to form a grass-roots neighborhood group. This collaborative would be comprised of South Wenatchee stakeholders and would encourage inclusive neighborhood participation and leadership development. The overarching goal of this organization would include identifying projects, programs and neighborhood issues (including the many identified above and during the “I Imagine” process) to improve the quality of life within the South Wenatchee area.
2. The City of Wenatchee Mayor’s office and the Department of Community and Economic Development supports this approach, and is willing to assist with this effort. These neighborhood groups can take many different forms. The City will work to provide citizens with information about various ways to structure these groups and identify funding sources to get started.
3. To learn more about neighborhood groups or share your ideas for South Wenatchee, feel free to invite us to your next meeting or community event by contacting:

Allison Williams
Director of Executive Services
City of Wenatchee
509-888-3616
awilliams@wenatcheewa.gov

Steve King
Director of Community and Economic Development
City of Wenatchee
509-888-3203
sking@wenatcheewa.gov

Will Piro
Community and Economic Development Intern
City of Wenatchee
509-88-3258
wpiro@wenatcheewa.gov

4. City of Wenatchee is devoting time and resources towards the development of a subarea plan. This resource will help community organizers develop solutions to pressing issues identified during community meetings and the recent “I Imagine South Wenatchee” project. The City of Wenatchee welcomes all opportunities to work with a future community group on South Wenatchee projects and neighborhood development.